

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I have known my grandmother's story all my life. But in today's climate of extreme prejudice and baseless hatred, I've felt especially compelled to share her story to the world. And not as a story of tragedy and trauma, but as what it truly is – a reflection of Gitta's optimism, hope, and bubbly personality, shaped by the people who put their lives on the line to protect her.

As a transgender woman of Jewish descent, I have noticed a disturbing rise in harmful rhetoric and vitriol mirroring the very situation that put my grandmother, a child who knew little of her own plight, in life-threatening danger. Every day, media and discourse continue to shape the manufactured narrative that everywhere hidden among us are monsters, these chosen blights on society who somehow threaten our very way of life. It is an unquestionably false and violent narrative that serves only to enrich those who crave power and subjugation. 80 years ago, that rhetoric targeted Jewish, Romani, and disabled people, among others. Today's targets are immigrants, people of color, and the queer community, but the end goal remains the same.

It is my hope that Gitta's story serves to remind people of a history that may be repeating itself, all while inspiring us to support one another and fight back against baseless oppression. On a personal level, I continue to strive to follow in Gitta's footsteps – by approaching life with hope and humor, even (and especially) in the face of seemingly insurmountable dangers.